

VZCZCXRO2661  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDA RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #3931/01 3380204  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 040204Z DEC 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4642  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003931

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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: THE EVER-EVOLVING CHALABI SERVICE COMMITTEE  
REF: BAGHDAD #3833

¶1. SUMMARY: Chalabi's service committee yet again changed format at it's November 27th meeting. Representatives from Baghdad's rural areas attended last week's meeting and detailed their service needs in what looked and felt like a town hall meeting. At the committee's previous meetings only official committee members were in attendance. END SUMMARY.

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Sabi' Al Bor Read Out  
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¶2. The meeting commenced with a trip report from Sabi' Al Bor. The Minister of Displacement and Migration, Senior Deputy Minister of Electricity, Deputy Minister of Trade, IG of Health, Commander of the Iraqi Forces, Dr. Chalabi and ITAO Director visited Sabi' Al Bor on November 27. They met with the municipal government and residents of Sabi' Al Bor; approximately 200 people were in attendance. The municipal council identified its most serious problems: electricity and water shortages (drinking and irrigation), shortage of medical equipment and personnel, school supply shortages and inadequate numbers of police. In response, the DM of Electricity promised to repair a particular water line; the IG of Health promised needed medical equipment and personnel; the Minister of Displacement promised 150,00ID per month for returning families and assistance in finding jobs for returnees; and the DM of Trade announced they would establish a ration center in the area and coordinate distribution with the municipal council. Other decision reached included; forming an emergency committee under the leadership of the municipal council that includes prominent, local sheikhs and national ministry representatives to protect and provide services to returnees; rehabilitating four schools; increasing checkpoints; and ensuring adequate numbers of police.

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Abu Ghraib Representatives Attend  
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¶3. Approximately 30 representatives from Abu Ghraib presented their list of services needs to Dr. Chalabi's committee, particularly in light of improved security conditions. They requested additional police, but Chalabi noted that his committee cannot address that issue, instead it should be referred to the Security Council. Chalabi also informed the Abu Ghraib representatives that his committee could not fund any projects because they do not have a budget to do so nor is it in the committee's mandate. The representatives detailed the qada's problems such as a dysfunctional irrigation system; limited sewage infrastructure; shortages of medical facilities, medical supplies and equipment, and medical staff; specific goods shortages in the PDS - the nation's food welfare program; non-functioning electrical transformers; fertilizer shortage and delayed agricultural loans.

¶4. The Committee made the following recommendations to address some of Abu Ghraib's services needs:  
--Establish an emergency service center in Abu-Ghraib to provide urgent services. Committee membership will include the municipal council, the district director and services department's heads as well as a representative from Chalabi's committee.

--The Ministry of Commerce will send a truck load of urgent food supplies.  
--The Ministry of Electricity was ordered to complete unfinished projects (repair transformers, send new transformers and tools and parts necessary for future repair and maintenance).  
--Baghdad Operation Command, along with the relevant local service departments, will study the possibility of opening the bridge connecting the center of Abu-Ghraib (on third river.)

¶5. Several requests were made of ministries not represented or formally included in Chalabi's services committee. This is the first set of such requests, but the recently signed executive order does require those ministries to cooperate with the committee to achieve its tasks.

--The Ministry of Water Resources is tasked to send 2 generators (750 KV) to Abu-Ghraib's irrigation project. They are also tasked with sending necessary equipment and tools.

--The Ministry of Agriculture is requested to reopen the agriculture parts center in Abu-Ghraib and provide the allocated portion of fertilizers and chemicals to the local farmers.

--The Agriculture Corporative Bank is requested to expedite loan applications for Abu Ghraib's farmers.

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The Board of Sahwa of north Souwaira Attends  
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¶6. Following Abu Ghraib, the Board of Sahwa presented their service needs to Chalabi's committee. School degradation and supplies topped the list as did medical supplies, equipment and personnel; PDS supply shortages; and a poor and inadequate national grid electrical supply, noting that of 1,000 houses in the area, 750 are powered by generators.

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¶7. The committee responded with several recommendations:

- \* The Ministry of Electricity was ordered to complete unfinished projects (repair transformers, send new transformers and tools and parts necessary for future repair and maintenance).
- \* The Ministry of Education was asked to conduct a study to determine the needs of the region.
- \* The Ministry of Commerce will provide a food portion from Baghdad storage.
- \* An emergency service center will be established in Al-Souwaira district similar to the above Abu-Ghraib center.

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Comment  
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¶8. According to Chalabi's staff, Abu Ghraib and Souwaira reached out to the committee. These regions are seeking a legitimate and effective body to address their service grievances particularly since Deputy Prime Minister Zoubai, formerly responsible for nation-wide service delivery, resigned from government approximately 5 months ago - creating a void in the services area.

¶9. Baghdad proper, or the ten service districts as defined by Fard Al Qanoon and the Baghdad Security Plan, has continued to address service delivery, particularly through the Joint Planning Commission (JPC). Up until recently, the qadas, or outlying, rural regions, have received less attention by the Iraqis as well as Coalition Forces. Currently underway though, is a joint Coalition-Iraqi endeavor to replicate the JPC at the qada level. The first meeting is scheduled in the coming weeks.

¶10. The visit to Sabi' Al Bor and the recent participation by local representatives at the services committee meeting will create an early test for Chalabi's committee. Those events have clearly added a "public face" to Dr. Chalabi and his committee. Previously, high-level ministry representatives were addressing service delivery issues that they themselves prioritized in cooperation with other bureaucrats only. Now, the committee is apparently linked to ordinary Iraqi citizens, having made promises to them directly.

